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 \* ONE OF LIFE'S LITTLE MYSTERIES \*  
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Here's a man who leads a most matter-of-fact life. He's a broker, or a plumber, or maybe he keeps a feed store. Anyhow, to look at him, you would never in the world think this of him:

Sometimes, though rarely, when everybody else in the house is asleep or gone to church, or perhaps to a show, this man goes to his room, takes a little key and unlocks one of those japanned sheet iron boxes folks keep mortgages in—and other things, more or less precious. From this box he takes another, an old-fashioned affair, all covered with periwinkle shells stuck on with glue. Opening this box in turn, he takes out a cheap and sleazy blue ribbon, tied in a bow.



He lifts the ribbon with tender care. He exercises especial care lest he crush out of shape the little round loop made by the knot. And laying this foolish trifle before him he contemplates it pensively, with a curious smile on his face—a twitchy kind of a smile that has a bias toward drooping at its extremities.

Sometimes he will sit looking at the little bow of ribbon thus for a long time—perhaps till the clock strikes twelve. Then he comes to himself with a start, hurriedly puts the ribbon in the periwinkled box and the little box in the larger one, and gets to bed before anybody has a chance to talk to him.

Not even this man's wife, whom he loves very dearly and faithfully, knows the secret of the ribbon in the periwinkled box.

This much is certain: SHE never wore such a ribbon. Her hair ribbons were of better quality than that. Besides, she always wore red ones.

However, she doesn't worry about it any more. He rarely thinks of the ribbon oftener than once a year—rarely more often than the wild crab-apples blow.

Nevertheless she is still mildly curious about it, especially as regards the secret significance of the perfume of wild crab-tree blossoms. But she knows by this time that her curiosity is vain.

For by this time she has learned that there is some insoluble mystery locked in every man's heart.